

OF SEX AND FEAR

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Some logologists are word collectors at heart. Over the years, the attention of these collectors has been drawn to three very special groups of words: those ending with the suffixes -MANCY (designating a form of divination), -MANIA (describing some kind of madness, passion, or craze), and -PHOBIA (referring to types of fear or aversion).

Each group includes many words unusual either in appearance, or in meaning, or in both. For example, there is LECANOMANCY, divination based on observing gold and silver plates put in a water basin with jewels, marked with magic characters; CRESOMANIA, a hallucination in which the victim imagines himself to be possessed of great wealth; and AICHMOPHOBIA, a morbid dread of being touched by a finger.

Not too many of these odd terms are part of our everyday vocabulary, and the usual question that arises takes the form, "What do you call divination by means of such and such a procedure, or a certain kind of mania, or a fear of this or that person, place, or thing?"

Some time ago, I set about creating a comprehensive file of all known phobias, alphabetized by subject, so that if I were asked what the proper term for fear of glass was, I could refer to the word "glass" in my file and instantly find the answer: CRYSTALLOPHOBIA, or HYALOPHOBIA, or NELOPHOBIA.

The project has proved to be a considerably larger one than I anticipated, for numerous reasons. First of all, there are hundreds and hundreds of different fears, so that a colossal file of terms has resulted. Secondly, many fears have more than one name, and many names have more than one definition. Furthermore, definitions of the same term vary depending on the source consulted, so that each term must be looked up in a dozen different sources to obtain the total picture.

Then there are special problems. Even if different sources give the same meaning for a particular term, it may be couched in a variety of wordings, posing the problem of deciding which wordings to include in the master file and which ones to exclude. To take a simple illustration, words such as AUTOPHOBIA, EREMOPHOBIA, ISOLOPHOBIA, and MONOPHOBIA are defined as the fear of being alone in some dictionaries, and as the fear of solitude in others. The two terms are about equal in point of commonness, making it necessary to include both BEING ALONE and SOLITUDE in the master file. On the other

hand, if NECROPHOBIA is variously defined as fear of corpses, or dead bodies, or the dead, it seems sufficient to list it under CORPSES, discarding the other two categories as superfluous. A large element of personal judgment enters into all such decisions.

A further problem is the incidence of error in some of the sources consulted. Thus, the Second Edition of Andrew Swanfeldt's Cross-word Puzzle Dictionary and the 1964 Edition of Frank E. Newman's New Practical Dictionary for Cross Word Puzzles both include TROPHOBIA as the fear of lightning. Yet, investigation establishes that no such word exists. It seems to be an error, by way of decapitation, for TONITROPHOBIA, one of several names for fear of thunder.

The complexity of the problems involved in creating a master file of fears requires categorizing all fears into groups, such as those dealing with diseases, various aspects of weather and climate, foreigners and nationalities, religion and the supernatural, and so forth, then examining all of the fears in one group more or less simultaneously. This grouping produces two very interesting classes of fears, nonhuman in character. One is a set of "fears" to which only plants are liable. For example, there is CALCIPHOBIA, an intolerance of limy soil exhibited by some plants, or HALOPHOBIA, a refusal by other plants to grow in soil containing an appreciable amount of salt. Better yet is MYRMECOPHOBIA, the repulsion for ants exhibited by certain plants which repel ants by means of hairs or glands.

The other set of fears exciting wonder is of a biochemical nature, one to which cells and tissues are peculiarly prone. For instance, there is OSMIOPHOBIA, the resistance to staining with osmic acid, or GENTIANOPHOBIA, refusal to stain readily with gentian violet, or CHROMOPHOBIA, the quality of staining poorly with dyes.

Another aspect of the problem brought out by my study is the fact that not all fears end with the suffix -PHOBIA. In some cases, the suffix is altered to -PHOBY, producing Websterian terms such as HYDROPHOBY (fear of water), OMBROPHOBY (fear of rain), and TAPINOPHOBY (fear of low or base things). Beyond that is a series of words ending with the suffix -RESPIA, at least some of which must be included with phobias: GAMORESPIA (fear of, or aversion to, marriage), GYMNORESPIA (fear of nakedness), and others. In the same category must be placed some of the words beginning with the prefix MISO-, and some miscellaneous terms such as CASTROPHRENIA, the fear of having one's thoughts stolen by enemies.

For the reasons just explained, as well as some others, compiling a master file of fears becomes a long-term project. This is intended to be an opening report on the subject. To illustrate what an exhaustive survey of one particular classification of fears can bring to light, I have selected my file of fears related to sex, given below. All of the terms are taken from a variety of standard dictionaries and synonyms, both general and medical. The source or sources of each term and each definition are available on request.

Object or Situation Feared: Names of Phobias

Bathing: ablutophobia
 Beautiful women (said of men): venustaphobia
 Being grabbed or pawed by a lusty male: agraphobia, contrectophobia
 Being raped (said of girls and women): virgivitiphobia
 Blushing: ereuthophobia, erythrophobia
 Childbirth: maieusiophobia, tocophobia
 Coitus: coitophobia, cypridophobia, cypriphobia, venereophobia
 Confinement for childbirth: maieusiophobia, tocophobia
 Dancing: chorophobia
 Erect penis: ithyphallophobia, medorthophobia
 Female sex organs: kolpophobia
 First act of sexual intercourse (said of women): primeisodophobia, esodophobia
 Girls: parthenophobia, misogyny
 Having one's erect penis collapse during coitus: medomalacophobia
 Having the contour of one's penis visible through one's clothes: medectophobia
 Hurting the woman in sexual intercourse by introducing one's penis into her vagina: anophelophobia
 Jealousy: zelophobia
 Kissing: philemaphobia
 Kissing (said of women): philematophobia
 Labor preceding childbirth: maieusiphobia, tocophobia
 Lewd women: cyprinophobia
 Losing sexual potency: aphanisis
 Love: erotophobia, philophobia
 Marriage: gametophobia, gamophobia, gamorespia, misogamy
 Men: androphobia, apandria, apanthropia, apanthropy, misandria, misandry, arrhenophobia
 Menstruation: menophobia
 Nakedness: gymnophobia, nudophobia, gymnorespia, misapodysis
 Necking: sarmassophobia, sarmassorespy
 Nudity: gymnophobia, nudophobia, gymnorespia, misapodysis
 Opposite sex: sexophobia
 Orgasm during one's sleep (said of men): oneirogmophobia
 Penis (said of women): phallophobia, misophally
 Petting: sarmassophobia, sarmassorespy
 Petting (said of women): malaxophobia
 Physical love: erotophobia, miserotia
 Pleasure: hedonophobia
 Pregnancy: maieusiophobia
 Prostitutes: cyprianophobia
 Remaining unmarried: anuptaphobia
 Sex: genophobia, sexophobia
 Sexual feelings: erotophobia
 Sexual intercourse: coitophobia, cypridophobia, cypriphobia, venereophobia, kolpophobia
 Sexual involvement of the anus or rectum in pre-coital play: proctophobia
 Spermatorrhea: spermatophobia

Syphilis: syphilidophobia, syphiliphobia, syphilophobia, syphilomania
 Undressing in the presence of another: dishabillophobia

Urination: urophobia

Venereal disease: cypridophobia, cypriphobia, venereophobia

Wearing clothing: nudomania, vestiophobia

Wet dreams: oneirogmophobia

Women: feminophobia, gynephobia, gynophobia, mysogyny

As time permits and occasion demands, other sections of my developing file of fears will be revealed to a breathlessly waiting world.

CAN NUNS WRITE MORONIC GAZETTES?

This was the anagrammatic question asked by Josefa Heifetz, the wife of the editor of the WESTERN CONSTRUCTION MAGAZINE, when he offered a \$25 prize to the reader sending in the best anagram on a word or phrase relating to the construction industry. The hat-hat readers of this trade journal came up with some surprisingly good ones (February 1974):

BECHTEL CORPORATION / the pro creation bloc
 ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS / so dial! attract
 scarce green soon!
 WESTERN CONSTRUCTION / worst nuts in concrete / winner
 on cost cutters
 LOW BIDDERS GO BROKE / bribes o' gold worked
 COST PLUS FIXED FEE / fox fleeces stupid
 CATERPILLAR TRACTORS / correct part is all art
 GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE / big lone red gadget
 RAYMOND INTERNATIONAL / toil on any damn terrain

The magazine staff judged the last anagram to be the winner.

WALLY WALLY WALLY WALLY WALLY

The August 1972 Word Ways featured an article on homophonic sentences in Chinese by Philip Cohen. It now turns out that Swahili is also blessed with these creations. On page 173 of Betty and Jock Leslie-Melville's Elephant Have Right Of Way (Doubleday, 1973), the Swahili sentence "Wale wa Liwali wale wale" (meaning "the people of the Arab chieftain eat cooked rice") is cited. How is it pronounced? Just say "Wally" five times.